

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9886
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY
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USEC

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SUBJ: MEETING BETWEEN TOP LABOR AND POLITICAL LEADERS

REFERENCE: ROME 0338

1. SUMMARY. THE TOP LEADERS OF ITALY'S THREE MAJOR LABOR
CONFEDERATIONS (CCU) MET JANUARY 12 WITH LEADING REPRESENTA-
TIVES OF THE SIX PARTIES WHICH SUSTAIN THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT.
THE MEETING HAD A SOMEWHAT PERFUNCTORY CHARACTER, INDUCED
BY THE GENERAL FEELING THAT SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE
STRUCTURE OF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT ARE IMMINENT. THE
CCU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS MEETING TODAY (JAN. 13) TO
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DISPOSE OF THE PENDING ISSUE OF A GENERAL STRIKE. IT IS
LIKELY THAT, IN LIEU OF A STRIKE, BRIEF FACTORY ASSEMBLIES
WILL BE CONDUCTED NATIONALLY TO DISCUSS CURRENT LABOR
ISSUES AND POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

2. LEADING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CCU AND OF THE SIX
POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH SUPPORT THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT

MET JANUARY 12 FOR SOME THREE-AND-ONE-HALF HOURS. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH, THOUGH NOT IN SPECIFIC DETAIL. IT WAS THEREFORE RELATIVELY EASY TO AGREE THAT SERIOUS PROBLEMS EXIST AND THAT EXTRAORDINARY REMEDIES WILL BE REQUIRED. (COMMENT: THE DISAGREEMENTS WILL COME WHEN THE NATURE OF THE SACRIFICES, AND THE IDENTITY OF THOSE WHO WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE THEM, ARE DISCUSSED. END COMMENT)

3. ONE NOELTY WAS A CCU PROPOSAL THAT THE THREE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES (BUDGET, TREASURY AND FINANCE) BE COMBINED INTO A SINGLE PORTFOLIO "IN ORDER TO ASSURE AN ORGANIC DIRECTION FOR THE RECOVERY PROGRAM." THE UNIONS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO MODERATE THE EFFECTS OF NEW WAGE DEMANDS BY STRETCHING THEM OVER A THREE-YEAR PERIOD. THEY ALSO PROPOSED THE CREATION OF A GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY TO ADMINISTER LABOR MOBILITY, UNDER TERMS YET TO BE AGREED UPON, BOTH WITHIN AND BETWEEN PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT.

4. MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION WAS POLITICAL. ALL SEEMINGLY AGREED THAT THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT WAS ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE. PREDICTABLY, THE NATURE OF THE PREFERRED CHANGES DIFFERED ALONG POLITICAL LINES, WITH COMMUNIST, SOCIALIST AND REPUBLICAN UNIONISTS AND POLITICIANS CALLING FOR THE ENTRY OF THE PCI INTO
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THE CABINET. OPINIONS VARIED AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS. CISL SECRETARY GENERAL MACARIO IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "I DON'T WANT TO BE THE BEARER OF ILL TIDINGS, BUT THERE IS SOME CHANCE OF EARLY ELECTIONS."

5. THE CCU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TODAY IS ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF A GENERAL STRIKE. IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS, IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT THE DECISION TO CONDUCT A GENERAL STRIKE WILL BE CANCELLED. INSTEAD, BRIEF FACTORY ASSEMBLIES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING CURRENT LABOR THINKING ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, ARE LIKELY TO BE PROCLAIMED. GARDNER

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